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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001682

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DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, INR/NESA, S/CT;
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SUBJECT: Biographic sketches of members of Tamil Tiger negotiating team slated to attend upcoming talks

(U) Classified by W. Lewis Amselem, Charge d'Affaires.
Reasons 1.5 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Para two contains brief biographic sketches of the members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) team attending the upcoming talks with the Sri Lankan government. (Note: The talks are scheduled to take place in Thailand, September 16-18.) The four members of the LTTE team are: Anton Balasingham, head of delegation and LTTE spokesman; Adele Balasingham, secretary for the team (she is the spouse of Anton

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Balasingham); Jay Maheswaran, a development expert; and Viswanathan Rudrakumar, a LTTE legal adviser based in the U.S.

¶2. (C) Brief biographic sketches of the LTTE delegation members follow:

-- Anton Balasingham, age 60, is the LTTE's London-based spokesman and the head of the group's delegation to the Thailand talks. He is originally from the coastal town of Point Pedro in Jaffna. Before becoming active in Tamil militant politics in the early 1970s, he was a journalist at the "Virakesari" Tamil newspaper and later an information specialist at the British High Commission in Colombo, where he was responsible for Tamil language translation services, among other duties. He has done some post-graduate work in London and worked as a lecturer at a university in the UK. He holds UK citizenship. His first wife (a Sri Lankan Tamil) died in the mid-1970's and he married Adele, a nurse from Australia, in 1978 (see below). Balasingham has very serious kidney problems and is also believed to suffer from diabetes. He speaks excellent English, Tamil, and Sinhalese.

According to those who have met him, Balasingham is intelligent and well mannered. He is dogmatic regarding the Tamil nationalist cause and is generally leftist in his politics. He seems willing to listen to the views of others, however, and is considered up-to-date on world events. An experienced negotiator, he was the head of the LTTE's team that negotiated with the GSL from 1988-90. One of the highest ranking LTTE officials, he has long been a key and loyal adviser to LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran. He served as translator during Prabhakaran's press conference in April 2002, often expanding on his leader's generally clipped responses.

-- Adele Balasingham, 52, an Australian national and nurse by profession, is Anton Balasingham's spouse (marrying him in 1978; they have no children). Her maiden name is Wilby and her mother is believed to live in Victoria state. She is secretary of the LTTE team going to Thailand. Based on all reports, she came from a middle class background in Australia, and became involved in LTTE and radical politics only after her marriage. Adele Balasingham is considered extremely dogmatic and inflexible regarding LTTE issues. A "Marxist-feminist" (to use her term), she had for years been deeply involved in the LTTE women's wing. Her key party duty now (ironically) is serving as assistant to her husband, who needs constant medical attention for his kidney ailment.

-- Dr. Jay Maheswaran, who is in his early 50's, is a key figure in the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), a pro-LTTE development assistance organization. He is believed to be an Australian national. He is a development expert and NGO activist, who often visits Sri Lanka from his home in Australia. He is probably the LTTE's key adviser on rehabilitation/resettlement issues. He represented the TRO during a large demining meeting hosted by the GSL on August 29, 2002. U.S. officials present at the meeting found him articulate, apparently well-educated, and capable of presenting the LTTE's views in a constructive manner. He speaks excellent English and Tamil.

-- Mr. Viswanathan Rudrakumar, 45, is considered a key adviser for the LTTE on legal issues. He hails from Jaffna and is the son of former Jaffna Mayor Raja Viswanathan (who now lives in Canada). A lawyer, he was educated at Jaffna Central College, receiving his legal degrees from Colombo University and Southern Methodist University in Texas. He also studied comparative and constitutional law for a period at Harvard, and has expertise in immigration law. He now lives in the U.S. and is apparently an American citizen. He is probably the LTTE's chief representative in the U.S., meeting with State Department officials on a number of occasions. Rudrakumar was involved in initiating legal action against the U.S. decision to ban the LTTE in 1997, an effort that proved unsuccessful.

13. (U) Minimize considered.

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